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Interview with His Excellency LI HUNG CHANG, Grand Sec- retary and Special Ambassador of His Majesty the Emperor of China, by representatives of Foreign Missionary Societies in the U. S. A. *

And his Attitude toward Christian Missions. *



THE VICEROY: "You will be good enough to convey the Viceroy's thanks to all those people. The Viceroy fully appreciates the philanthropic object you have in view."

New York, September 1st, 1896.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF
YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION,
40 East 23d Street, New York City.

A very faint, blurry background image of a person wearing a dark suit jacket, a white shirt, and a patterned tie. The person appears to be standing and looking slightly to the left. The image is intentionally faded and out of focus.

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Interview with His Excellency Li Hung Chang.



The visit of Li Hung Chang to the United States, after his journey in other parts of the world, has been an event of more than passing importance, and has excited the greatest interest in all circles.

His reputation as a prominent official in the Chinese government was increased by his negotiation of the peace treaty with Japan, and to this was added, by his journey in other countries, the fame of his courtesy and kindness and a knowledge of his intelligent appreciation of that which he saw in lands strange to him.

His arrival in New York was heralded in advance of his coming, and preparations were made by all classes to give him a suitable reception. The Foreign Missionary Boards, which had carried on work for so many years in China, joined with others in the desire to recognize and greet the Viceroy, and plans were instituted early in the summer to secure an interview with him, so as to present to him a congratulatory address in recognition of his well-known friendliness to the foreign missionaries in China, and to acknowledge the attitude which the Chinese government has habitually assumed in relation to the missionaries.

The Hon. E. B. Drew, a Harvard graduate, and for about twenty years a resident of China, a Mandarin of the third rank and a Commissioner

of the Imperial Customs of China, was appointed to meet and aid the Viceroy during his stay in the United States. Associated with Mr. Drew in personal relationship to the Viceroy, owing to his having been Counsel for the Chinese government during the negotiation of the peace treaty with Japan, was the Hon. John W. Foster, ex-Secretary of State.

Through the courtesy of Mr. Foster and Mr. Drew arrangements were made by which the Viceroy consented to receive a very small group, not to exceed thirty or thirty-five, as representatives of all the Foreign Missionary Boards working in China. The committee having the matter in charge extended the necessary invitations and at nine o'clock upon the morning of September 1st this group met in the Hotel Waldorf, New York City, and were immediately ushered into the audience room to meet the Viceroy. The different Boards were represented as follows:

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions:

REV. JUDSON SMITH, D.D.; REV. A. C. THOMPSON, D.D.; REV. C. C. CREEGAN, D.D.; REV. HENRY STIMSON, D.D.

Board of Foreign Missions of Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.:

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COL. JOHN J. McCook was present as a friend of the Viceroy, as well as of missions, and there were also present REV. HENRY BLODGET, D.D., of China, and REV. J. K. WIGHT.

The party was seated circling the room, while in the center of the room an oval table was placed with a few chairs for the convenience of the Viceroy and his attendants. Presently the Viceroy, with one or two attendants and the interpreter, Lo Fing Luh, Mr. Foster and Mr. Drew entered the room. The delegation at once rose in greeting, and, with a slight bow, the Viceroy seated himself, while his interpreter said :

"He is very weak in his constitution, if you will allow him to take his seat."

Mr. Foster then introduced Dr. Ellinwood, Chairman of a Committee which had been appointed to prepare and present an Address. A copy of this had been placed in the hands of the Viceroy's interpreter for the use of the Viceroy before the interview was held. In introducing Dr. Ellinwood, Mr. Foster said :

"These gentlemen represent eight millions of the best citizens of our country. Their missions have sixty hospitals in China, and have during the last year cured or served half a million subjects in their hospitals. They also have four hundred schools in China, educating twelve thousand Chinese children, so that they are not only attempting to propagate their religious views, but they are attempting to do something for the material and intellectual benefit of the Chinese people. I will present the representatives of the different Boards, and Dr. Ellinwood will make the address."

The Address had been handsomely engrossed in a sealskin portfolio lined with red, and was read to the Viceroy by Dr. Ellinwood. During the reading, the interpreter carefully followed the printed copy in his hand, while the Viceroy listened most attentively and courteously, though unfamiliar

with English, occasionally glancing around with very keen scrutiny at the different persons present before him.

To His Excellency, Li Hung Chang, Grand Secretary, and Special Ambassador of his Majesty, the Emperor of China.

Among the thousands of our countrymen who are seeking opportunity to do honor to you and to your August Sovereign, we, the representatives of various Boards and Societies engaged in Christian Missions in China, beg leave to present to you our most hearty greetings, and to assure you of the profound respect which we cherish toward that great and illustrious Empire which you so worthily represent. For the last fifty years the missionaries of these Boards have been favored with the protection of your Government, and we are frank to say that in no nation of the world have American missionaries received more just and even generous treatment than that accorded to our missionaries by the Imperial Government of China.

It is remarkable how very few of our missionaries, out of the many hundreds who have lived in China, have lost their lives through violence, and we recall no instance in which such casualties have occurred with the sanction or even connivance of your Government. On the contrary, there have been many instances in which local officials, who have been remiss in affording proper protection, have suffered punishment for their neglect. We take special pleasure in paying this tribute to the justice and humanity shown by that August Power which you have the honor to represent.

We remember with lively gratitude the various

edicts and proclamations which have been issued by the Imperial Government direct, or by various subordinate officials, not only enjoining protection to our missionaries, but assuring the people of their peaceable intentions and the disinterested character of their work. A very remarkable edict of this kind was issued in the year 1891, in the name of his August Majesty, the Emperor, and written the last year proclamations issued in the same spirit, have been made by the Prefects of Pao-tingfu, of Ichowfu, of the Nanking district, and by the Taoutai of Kiungchow, in Hainan. It is extremely gratifying to observe that at the present time the disinterested spirit and labor of our missionaries seem to be better understood and more thoroughly appreciated than ever before.

We recall many kindly expressions uttered by yourself and others of the appreciation with which you regard our educational work, the services of missionaries, both men and women, in the hospitals and dispensaries, and the self-denying efforts put forth by missionaries in the distribution of relief in time of famine.

On our part we have been conscious from the first of only the most disinterested motives. Our missionaries have not sought for pecuniary gains at the hands of your people; they have not been secret emissaries of diplomatic schemes; their labors have had no political significance; they have only desired to communicate good. We are frank to say that while our work has aimed to relieve suffering and to improve the minds of the young by education, we have been moved by still higher considerations. We do not believe that religion is a thing of ethnic limitations, but that whatever of truth the Great Author of our being has made known to men of any nation, is the

rightful heritage of all mankind; and that as matter of natural and imperative obligation those who believe that they have received the truth are bound to make it known to others. If it is of advantage to mankind that the commerce of material interests and of ideas in science or philosophy shall be promoted, we deem it still more important that free intercommunication shall be accorded to those greatest of all truths which concern the immortal destinies of men. And it is with great satisfaction that we have learned of the assurance which you gave some months since to an American Bishop, that the medical and educational work of our missionaries would continue to be welcomed and protected in China. Indeed, you have for many years given abundant proofs of your generous spirit in this regard.

We have endeavored to prosecute our work in a courteous and appreciative spirit. Our most intelligent missionaries have always shown great respect for those illustrious sages, Confucius, Mencius and others. It was a missionary who translated the Confucian Classics into our language, and others have set forth their just merits in many a publication for American readers. We have not hesitated to express our admiration for the stability of your government and institutions, the principles of filial reverence and domestic order on which your institutions rest, the admirable regulation which bases political preferment not upon the success of partisan power or skill, but upon competitive merit.

We believe that in many of these things we may well profit by your example, and on the other hand, our only motive in offering to your people our medical and educational systems, and the great and salutary teachings of our Christian faith

is our deep conviction that they will prove a blessing.

While we send missionaries to China, we are not unmindful of our duty to those of your people who have come to our own shores. They have in many instances been rudely treated by certain classes amongst us, mostly immigrants from other lands, but our Christian people have uniformly shown them kindness. They have been gathered into Sunday schools and evening schools; their rights have been defended in the courts, and many times have deputations from the Missionary Boards and other benevolent societies petitioned our Government in the interest of just legislation for the Chinese.

Were you to visit our Pacific Coast, you would observe with interest the homes and refuges which, with the co-operation of the Chinese Consul-General, the Christian women of that coast have provided for unfortunate Chinese girls who have been sold into the most debasing slavery. We believe that all these best impulses of philanthropy which led our people to forget all divisions of nationality and of race, and to stretch out their arms in true brotherhood to your people, whether here or in China, are the direct fruit of the teachings of the Divine Founder of Christianity. Having through the influence of the Christian faith received so rich an inheritance of blessing, we feel constrained in gratitude to God, to regard ourselves as debtors to all men. For this reason we strive to proclaim in all lands, the knowledge of our Divine Teacher and only Saviour, Jesus Christ.

In closing, permit us to express anew the satisfaction which we have felt in being permitted to meet your Excellency, and to thank you for your repeated kindnesses to our missionaries. We thank

the Great Father of mankind that He has so long spared your life in the midst of many perils ; that He has permitted you to be of such eminent service to your country in many trying emergencies, which few men of any nation could have met with such great ability and success.

And we commend you to His care as you return to your distant home, where you will enjoy the consciousness that not only your countrymen but all mankind unite in honoring your name.

After the reading, the Viceroy said, through his interpreter :

“ The Viceroy is very grateful and thankful for the kind sentiments which you have so ably expressed. The Viceroy highly appreciates the philanthropic object which you have always in view in improving the souls, the mind and physique of all the Chinese. The Viceroy fully appreciates that all the American missionaries in China have disinterested motives. They only work for the good of the human kind. The Viceroy authorizes me to read his reply to you ” :

Reply of the Viceroy to the Address of the Missionary Societies.

GENTLEMEN : It affords me great pleasure to acknowledge the grateful welcome to this country offered to me by you as the representatives of the various Boards and Societies who have engaged in China in exchanging our ideas of the greatest of all truths which concern the immortal destinies of men.

In the name of my August Master, the Emperor of China, I beg to tender to you his best thanks for your approval and appreciation for the protection afforded to the American missionaries in China. What we have done and how little we

have done on our part is nothing but the duties of our government; while the missionaries, as you have so ably expressed, have not sought for pecuniary gains at the hands of our people. They have not been secret emissaries of diplomatic schemes. Their labors have no political significance, and the last, not the least, if I might be permitted to add, they have not interfered with or usurped the rights of the territorial authorities.

In a philosophical point of view, as far as I have been enabled to appreciate, Christianity does not differ much from Confucianism, as the Golden Rule is expressed in a positive form in one, while it is expressed in the negative form in another. Logically speaking, whether these two forms of expressing the same truth cover exactly the same ground or not, I leave it to the investigations of those who have more philosophical tastes. It is, at the present, enough to conclude that there exists not much difference between the wise sayings of the two greatest teachers, on the foundations of which the whole structure of the two systems of morality is built. As man is composed of soul, intellect and body, I highly appreciate that your eminent Boards, in your arduous and much esteemed work in the field of China, have neglected none of the three. I need not say much about the first, being an unknowable mystery of which our greatest Confucius had only an active knowledge. As for intellect, you have started numerous educational establishments which have served as the best means to enable our countrymen to acquire a fair knowledge of the modern arts and sciences of the West. As for the material part of our constitution, your societies have started hospitals and dispensaries to save not only the souls but also the bodies of our countrymen. I have

also to add that in the time of famine in some of the provinces you have done your best to the greatest number of the sufferers to keep their bodies and souls together.

Before I bring my reply to a conclusion I have only two things to mention.

The first, the opium smoking, being a great curse to the Chinese population, your societies have tried your best not only as anti-opium societies, but to afford the best means to stop the craving for the opium; and also you receive none as your converts who are opium smokers.

I have to tender, in my own name, my best thanks for your most effective prayers to God to spare my life when it was imperilled by the assassin's bullet, and for your most kind wishes which you have just now so ably expressed in the interests of my sovereign, my country and people.

The Foreign Missionary representatives gave close attention to this paper, being most deeply interested by the clear, earnest expressions, which showed by their discrimination that the Viceroy had not only thought of the work actually being done in China, but had read with care, by the aid of his interpreter, the address presented on behalf of the Boards, and all were very much gratified by the cordial expressions of the Viceroy in his response.

The members of the delegation were then presented by Dr. Ellinwood to the Viceroy, who shook hands cordially with each one, occasionally pausing and asking some question through his interpreter. Dr. Wells, President of the Presbyterian Board, whose white beard and venerable appearance attracted the Viceroy's attention, was asked by the latter, "How old are you?" and on

replying "eighty-one," the Viceroy responded, "God has kept you; may He keep you still." Mr. Wight, being presented, had the same question asked, and replying, said that he had a son and daughter in China. This seemed to interest the Viceroy very much.

At the close of the presentation the Viceroy asked Dr. Ellinwood, "How many Boards and Societies are there in China from America?"

DR. ELLINWOOD: "Eleven; but we represent about eight millions of people."

THE VICEROY: "They are all represented here?"

DR. ELLINWOOD: "Yes."

THE VICEROY: "YOU WILL BE GOOD ENOUGH TO CONVEY THE VICEROY'S THANKS TO ALL THOSE PEOPLE. THE VICEROY FULLY APPRECIATES THE PHILANTHROPHIC OBJECT YOU HAVE IN VIEW."

As he was going out, the Viceroy asked Col. McCook whether he and Mr. Foster were members of the societies represented.

Mr. Foster answered "Yes, but we are not ministers; we are laymen."

THE VICEROY: "Then you are the protectors of the Societies?"

COL. MCCOOK: "Oh, no (laughing); they protect us!"

At the close, while the representatives of the missions were already beginning to disperse, the Viceroy again spoke to Dr. Ellinwood, laying his hand upon his arm, saying, "I greatly appreciate the kind expressions which you gentlemen have made to me, and especially your kind wishes for my safe return to my home." This added expression was evidently heartfelt.

李鴻章



MAY 9 '60

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Printed for the AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY,
Which was Instituted in the Year of

OUR LORD

MDCCCXVI.

*The Lord shall arise upon thee,
And his glory shall be seen upon thee;
And the Gentiles shall come to thy light,
And kings to the brightness of thy rising.*

Isaiah 60. 2, 3.

*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth,
will draw all men unto me. John 12. 32.*

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In the name of my August Master, the Emperor of China, I beg to tender to you his best thanks for your approval and appreciation for the protection afforded to the American missionaries in China. What we have done and how little we

have done on our part is nothing but the duties of our government; while the missionaries, as you have so ably expressed, have not sought for pecuniary gains at the hands of our people. They have not been secret emissaries of diplomatic schemes. Their labors have no political significance, and the last, not the least, if I might be permitted to add, they have not interfered with or usurped the rights of the territorial authorities.

In a philosophical point of view, as far as I have been enabled to appreciate, Christianity does not differ much from Confucianism, as the Golden Rule is expressed in a positive form in one, while it is expressed in the negative form in another. Logically speaking, whether these two forms of expressing the same truth cover exactly the same ground or not, I leave it to the investigations of those who have more philosophical tastes. It is, at the present, enough to conclude that there exists not much difference between the wise sayings of the two greatest teachers, on the foundations of which the whole structure of the two systems of morality is built. As man is composed of soul, intellect and body, I highly appreciate that your eminent Boards, in your arduous and much esteemed work in the field of China, have neglected none of the three. I need not say much about the first, being an unknowable mystery of which our greatest Confucius had only an active knowledge. As for intellect, you have started numerous educational establishments which have served as the best means to enable our countrymen to acquire a fair knowledge of the modern arts and sciences of the West. As for the material part of our constitution, your societies have started hospitals and dispensaries to save not only the souls but also the bodies of our countrymen. I have

also to add that in the time of famine in some of the provinces you have done your best to the greatest number of the sufferers to keep their bodies and souls together.

Before I bring my reply to a conclusion I have only two things to mention.

The first, the opium smoking, being a great curse to the Chinese population, your societies have tried your best not only as anti-opium societies, but to afford the best means to stop the craving for the opium; and also you receive none as your converts who are opium smokers.

I have to tender, in my own name, my best thanks for your most effective prayers to God to spare my life when it was imperilled by the assassin's bullet, and for your most kind wishes which you have just now so ably expressed in the interests of my sovereign, my country and people.

The Foreign Missionary representatives gave close attention to this paper, being most deeply interested by the clear, earnest expressions, which showed by their discrimination that the Viceroy had not only thought of the work actually being done in China, but had read with care, by the aid of his interpreter, the address presented on behalf of the Boards, and all were very much gratified by the cordial expressions of the Viceroy in his response.

The members of the delegation were then presented by Dr. Ellinwood to the Viceroy, who shook hands cordially with each one, occasionally pausing and asking some question through his interpreter. Dr. Wells, President of the Presbyterian Board, whose white beard and venerable appearance attracted the Viceroy's attention, was asked by the latter, "How old are you?" and on

replying "eighty-one," the Viceroy responded, "God has kept you; may He keep you still." Mr. Wight, being presented, had the same question asked, and replying, said that he had a son and daughter in China. This seemed to interest the Viceroy very much.

At the close of the presentation the Viceroy asked Dr. Ellinwood, "How many Boards and Societies are there in China from America?"

DR. ELLINWOOD: "Eleven; but we represent about eight millions of people."

THE VICEROY: "They are all represented here?"

DR. ELLINWOOD: "Yes."

THE VICEROY: "YOU WILL BE GOOD ENOUGH TO CONVEY THE VICEROY'S THANKS TO ALL THOSE PEOPLE. THE VICEROY FULLY APPRECIATES THE PHILANTHROPHIC OBJECT YOU HAVE IN VIEW."

As he was going out, the Viceroy asked Col. McCook whether he and Mr. Foster were members of the societies represented.

Mr. Foster answered "Yes, but we are not ministers; we are laymen."

THE VICEROY: "Then you are the protectors of the Societies?"

COL. MCCOOK: "Oh, no (laughing); they protect us!"

At the close, while the representatives of the missions were already beginning to disperse, the Viceroy again spoke to Dr. Ellinwood, laying his hand upon his arm, saying, "I greatly appreciate the kind expressions which you gentlemen have made to me, and especially your kind wishes for my safe return to my home." This added expression was evidently heartfelt.

THE VICEROY AND HIS IDEAS.

[From the Independent.]

Li Hung Chang is the most unique personality we have ever welcomed from abroad. . . . Even when he talks about religion, he talks not as we imagine a heathen ought to talk, but as one who is not far from us in thought and feeling, though differing widely from us in matters of creed, custom, and ceremony. He begins by acknowledging religious truths as the greatest of all truths, concerning, as they do, "the immortal destinies of men," declares that China has only done its duty in protecting Christian missionaries, and pays the missionaries the tribute (which some of their countrymen have denied) of conceding that their aim is not "pecuniary gains," that they are not "secret emissaries of diplomatic schemes," that their "labors have no political significance," and that they have not "interfered with nor usurped the rights of the territorial authorities." He goes further, to the discomfiture of some of our smart naval officers, and declares that the missionaries have provided the "best means" to give the Chinese a knowledge of modern arts and sciences, have established "dispensaries and hospitals to save not only the soul but the body of our countrymen," and have done their best to relieve sufferers by famine. Nor does he omit to add a word of hearty appreciation of the work of the missionaries in lessening the evil of opium smoking.

It is to be remembered that it is a heathen, according to our method of classification, who renders to Christian missionaries this meed of praise for their purity of purpose, for their broad humanity, and for their unselfish labors. Although himself a disciple of Confucius, he shows none of the prejudices of a sectarian. . . . We are far from claiming that Li Hung Chang is a Christian; we simply desire to point out that he is a very broad-minded heathen, who, while he adheres to his own peculiar religion, appreciates Christianity and gives Christian missions in China the most remarkable tribute they have ever received from a non-Christian source.

李鴻章

